

SURVEY REPORT

City of Shoreline Historic Resources Survey and Inventory Update

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Executive Summary

The City of Shoreline has a rich history, beginning with use of the area by Native peoples, later logging and farming activities, early semi-rural suburban developments along the Seattle-Everett Interurban Line and later Highway 99, and intensified suburban development following World War II. Buildings, structures, and sites remain in Shoreline which help tell the story of the community's growth and change. This survey was undertaken to identify these sites and to document their associations with Shoreline's history.

The Shoreline area was initially surveyed by the King County Historic Preservation Program in 1978. Twenty-nine properties in the area which is now incorporated Shoreline were documented and included the King County Historic Resources Inventory.¹ The 1978 survey considered properties built before 1938, and focused primarily on properties built prior to 1930.² Shoreline experienced dramatic growth during the post-World War II building boom. In addition to updating existing inventory records, and identifying properties built before 1938 which were not documented in the 1978 survey, this focused on properties built after 1938, with particular emphasis on properties associated with post-World War II suburbanization.

This survey resulted in the addition of 59 individual properties and two districts to the inventory. Nineteen thirties automobile-oriented commercial properties on Highway 99, suburban residences from the 1920s, and a World War II Naval Hospital are particularly noteworthy additions to the inventory.

Copies of the inventory will be available to the public at Shoreline City. The inventory is a useful source information about community history and local historic properties for people researching Shoreline history. The information gathered in the survey process will be used to help the City plan for the protection of important historic resources and to help prioritize specific preservation activities such as pursuing local landmark designation.

¹The Highlands and Seattle Golf Club were not considered in this inventory. Properties previously documented in the King County Historic Resources Inventory which are located in these areas are: The Seattle Golf and Country Club, HRI#0094; Florence Henry Memorial Chapel, HRI#0190; Highlands Residential District, HRI#0200; Highlands School, HRI#0292; and the William Boeing House, HRI#0912.

²King County Historic Resources Surveys typically focus on properties older than 40 years. Consequently, since the initial survey of Shoreline, properties associated with post-war development had become eligible for inclusion in the inventory. King County/City of Shoreline Landmarks and Heritage Commission Guidelines require properties to be 40 years or older to be eligible for designation as landmarks, unless a property less than 40 years old is of particular significance.

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1. Introduction

This survey covered the City of Shoreline and unincorporated areas between the eastern boundary of Shoreline and the western boundary of Lake Forest Park. The total land area surveyed was roughly 12 square miles (7680 acres). The City of Shoreline, located in northwestern King County, is bounded to the south by the City of Seattle (at N 145th Street) and to the north by the King-Snohomish county line (at N 205th Street). The Puget Sound establishes the western boundary, while the City of Lake Forest Park and unincorporated areas bound the survey area on the east. (See Map 1: Survey Area) During the course of the survey project, the City of Lake Forest Park annexed land originally included within the survey area. Resources within the City of Lake Forest Park are being evaluated in a separate survey conducted by the City.

The survey was initiated in 1994 by the King County Historic Preservation Program as part of its on-going work to update its historic resources inventory. Shoreline was known to have a high concentration of post-World War II resources associated with suburban development. The King County Historic Preservation Program was interested in beginning to evaluate this resource type.

Following the incorporation of the City of Shoreline in 1995, and the development of an interlocal agreement between the City and the King County Historic Preservation Program to provide preservation services to the new city in 1996, the survey was completed by the county Historic Preservation Program staff in consultation with City of Shoreline planning staff and with assistance from the Shoreline Historical Museum.

The survey was initially coordinated by Alexa Berlow, who participated in initial field evaluations and conducted research toward the development of a post World War II historic context. Cloantha Copass, Cultural Resources Specialist with the King County Historic Preservation Program became coordinator of the project in 1995. She conducted the final site selection and prepared the context statement and inventory forms for the selected properties. Other King County staff members participating in the survey were Julie Koler, King County Preservation Officer, and Charlie Sundberg, King County Historic Preservation Planner, who assisted with site identification and documentation. All King County Staff working on the project meet the National Park Service professional qualification standards for survey personnel. Funding for the project was provided by the City of Shoreline, King County, and a grant from the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund awarded by the State of Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

Vicki Stiles, Executive Director, Shoreline Historical Museum provided assistance with site identification and research. Shoreline Historical Museum staff members provided research assistance. Additionally, Sarah Bohlen, Associate Planner for the City of Shoreline coordinated the City of Shoreline's participation.

2. The Survey Process

Objectives

The objectives of the survey project were to update the existing inventory data for the area, add newly eligible properties to the inventory, and to include resource types overlooked in the earlier inventory. Archaeological sites, traditional cultural properties, and historic landscapes were not identified or evaluated in this survey.

The information gathered will be used by the City of Shoreline in its community-based Comprehensive Planning process. The data will be used both to assess ways to protect resources, and to imbue citizen's discussions of community identity with a sense of community history. The inventory will be used by the Historic Preservation Program to help identify threatened properties and property types, in order to prioritize preservation activities such as pursuing local landmark status or stabilization grants.

The inventory will provide a source of information for Shoreline residents interested in learning more about their community's history. The inventory will also provide a systematic way to organize additional information gathered about significant properties through the on-going work of the Shoreline Historical Museum. The data collected will also be used for grant management and implementation, an objective of the State Historic Preservation Program.

Methodology

The survey began with a list of properties in the survey area which were built prior to 1954 (according to the county Assessor's data). This list identified over 7,200 properties. Given the size of the survey area, and the number of properties to evaluate, the survey team prepared field maps with the location of all properties within the survey area built before 1940. Approximately 1,000 properties received a preliminary field evaluation.

Properties built after 1940 were identified and added to the map in the course of the windshield survey. The large number of post-war homes posed a challenge for the survey team, which decided to prioritize for inclusion properties located within cohesive subdivisions which could be identified as model homes.

Because some of the historically significant post-war subdivisions had very similar homes, it was difficult to select just a few properties to represent the subdivision. The post-war tract homes in Shoreline were typically small; many had been altered and no longer had a high degree of physical integrity. The survey team also decided to consider entire subdivisions,

provided there was a high degree of integrity in the overall form of the neighborhood, including both architectural styles and site plan, including road layouts, infrastructure, building heights, and setbacks.

The windshield survey yielded a list of approximately 200 potential inventory sites which had physical integrity, a significant historic association, or represented a unique or rare property type. These potential sites were compared to historic tax assessor's photos to verify the field assessment. In many cases, this comparison revealed substantial alterations not easily detected in the field. Where there were numerous properties representing a particular building type or architectural influence, the team selected the most intact and representative properties for inclusion on the inventory, with consideration for geographic distribution.

After reviewing the preliminary site list, the survey team narrowed the list to approximately 60 previously unsurveyed properties which had the highest degree of integrity for their type or represented particularly rare and/or significant property types. Shoreline Historical Museum staff also recommended for inclusion in the inventory properties which represented rare property types or were highly significant in community history which had not been identified through the windshield survey process.

The survey team consulted a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify potentially significant properties and property types, including the archival collections of the Shoreline Historical Museum, several community histories written about Shoreline's early development, historic photographs and property data from the King County Assessor's Records, and period publications from the Seattle Public Library and the University of Washington School of Architecture libraries related to the theme of suburban development from the 1920s-1950s.

Maps used in this survey process included: current County Assessor's Maps, McKee's Correct Road Map (1894), Anderson Atlas of King County (1907), Kroll Map Company Atlas (1930), and Charles F. Metsker King County Atlas (1940), and a GIS-generated map of properties built before 1954, color coded by decade.

Public input for the inventory came from a Citizen's Advisory Commission on a cultural plan for the new City of Shoreline. Committee members joined survey staff during the windshield survey process.

3. Expectations

The 1978 survey led to the inclusion of 29 Shoreline properties in the King County Historic Resources Inventory. The Crawford Store in Richmond Beach was subsequently designated a King County Landmark, and the Ronald School was designated a King County Community Landmark, a designation with no regulatory implications.

The survey team expected that most of the properties identified in the survey would be associated with development in the Shoreline area after 1938 (the previous cut-off date for consideration). In actuality, the survey team identified a number of properties which had not been included in the previous inventory which were associated with the themes of highway-oriented commercial development on Highway 99, with small-scale farming in the uplands, and also with pre-World War II suburban developments. Because development had focused along key transportation corridors, the survey team expected that inventory properties would be located within these corridors, or in associated land development. Map 2 shows the location of inventoried sites.

The City of Shoreline is presently developing the elements of its Comprehensive Plan. Survey findings will be used to facilitate the neighborhood planning process and to prioritize activities undertaken by the City with the King County Historic Preservation Program through the interlocal agreement adopted in 1996. The findings will also be used to educate community residents about local history.

4. Overview of Shoreline History and Development

See Appendix A for the full text of the Historic Context Overview

Shoreline has been shaped over time by changing transportation networks and land use patterns. The emergence of Seattle as King County's commercial center significantly influenced the development patterns in the Shoreline area. Expanding transportation networks reaching out from Seattle into the surrounding communities encouraged suburban development starting soon after the turn of the century.

Prior to the arrival of Euro-American people in the region, Native American peoples utilized the various natural resources of the Shoreline area. Early accounts tell us that Native American people traveled along shoreline and stream drainages to collect resources such as kinikinnic (used as tobacco) at Richmond Beach, and wild cranberries at what are now Ronald Bog and Twin Ponds.

In the 1880s, railroad fever gripped the Northwest, and speculators planned towns in anticipation of the arrival of the trans-continental railroad route. Among these was Richmond Beach, platted in 1890. The arrival of the railroad in Richmond Beach in 1891 spurred the growth of the small town and increased the pace of development in the wooded uplands. Small sawmill operations were found at many of the lakes, and small farms dotted the land.

Between 1905 and 1925, the construction of the Seattle-Everett Interurban line and the brick-surfaced North Trunk Road made travel to and from Shoreline easier, which facilitated suburban development. People could live on a large lot in a semi-rural area, raising much of

their own food and still be able to take the train to work or school in Seattle. Local produce from chicken and strawberry farms could be shipped to the city via the interurban.

During the early twentieth century, Shoreline attracted some large developments, which were drawn by its rural yet accessible location. These included the Highlands and the Seattle Golf Club (1907), and the Firlands Tuberculosis Sanitarium (1911), which is now King's Gardens. Commercial centers formed around the Interurban stops at Ronald (175th and Aurora) and the Richmond Highlands (185th and Aurora). While large tracts of land in Shoreline were divided into smaller lots in the 1910s in anticipation of future development, houses tended to be scattered rather than concentrated in specific subdivisions.

During the Great Depression and World War II (1930-1945) the pace of housing development in Shoreline slowed. During the Depression, many Shoreline families eked out a living on land they had purchased during better times. By the later 1930s, commercial development concentrated along Aurora which saw steadily increasing use as part of the region's primary north-south travel route--US Highway 99. Traffic on 99 swelled, particularly after the closing of the Interurban line in 1938, and auto-oriented businesses opened along the highway. During World War II, building materials were rationed and private housing construction virtually stopped. The only major development in Shoreline during the war was the Fircrest Naval Hospital. At its peak in 1945, the hospital housed over 2,000 patients and 600 staff.

With the end of World War II came a tremendous demand for family housing. The late 1940s saw large housing developments spring up seemingly overnight. Schools ran on double shifts as families with young children moved into the new homes. In the late 1940s, business leaders and residents began to see Shoreline as a unified region rather than as scattered settlements concentrated at interurban stops and road intersections. In 1949, the name "Shoreline" was coined by a Lake City student for a contest, "Shoreline" described a community running from sound shore to lake shore and from city line to county line.

5. Analysis of Survey Results and Development Trends

Very few resources remain for consideration for the inventory which are associated with the first wave of Euro-American settlement (1880-1904). No buildings with good physical integrity remain which were directly associated with the railroad development in Richmond Beach, lumber production, agricultural production, or the interurban railroad. Most of the properties included in the inventory date to the area's second or third phase of development, when small scale farming and then suburban development took place. The earliest community building with any degree of integrity is the Richmond Masonic Hall (1922). The low retention rate for the older buildings reflects the fact that they were typically simple, wooden buildings designed to serve a smaller population. They were vulnerable to fire and road expansion projects, as well as changing land uses, technologies, and residential building needs.

Most of the properties inventoried gain their significance as representatives of a property type associated with historic residential development patterns in Shoreline. Most homes show some degree of Craftsman influence; however, Revival styles had an increasing influence in the mid-to-late 1920s.

A few particularly noteworthy properties include surviving community buildings, particularly the Lago Vista Community Club and the Richmond Masonic Hall. Also, mixed-use and commercial properties on Aurora Avenue in the vicinity of 175th, though altered, are noteworthy reflections of the development along what became a well-traveled highway and commercial corridor which came to form the spine of the community. The Firlands Tuberculosis Sanitarium (1914), is a highly-significant site associated with the theme of public health. This inventory also identifies a highly significant sites associated with World War II, the Firlands Naval Hospital, now owned by the State of Washington Department of Health and Human Services. As the U.S. Department of Defense removes WWII “temporary” buildings from its facilities, those remaining on non-Federal lands will represent an increasingly rare property type. Finally, the inclusion of properties associated post-war residential development in the Innis Arden and Ridgecrest subdivisions is significant since the consideration of post WWII residential properties which will increasingly be a part of survey and inventory efforts.

Development trends in the area point toward expansion of both residential and commercial development, particularly along the arterials. Since the land in Shoreline is almost entirely developed, new development will typically replace existing older structures with new buildings. This trend is evident not only in the commercial zones, but in the residential districts as well. Market preference for larger, new homes, particularly on view lots, has led to demolition and replacement of homes less than 40 years old. Because many of the older homes in the early subdivisions were very modest in size, they were frequently remodeled and enlarged, sometimes soon after construction. Maintenance and/or repair work, which, while well-intentioned, can also result in the loss of historic integrity.

Road expansion projects in Shoreline potentially pose a threat to historic properties, particularly along the Highway 99/Aurora Avenue corridor. Even where buildings are not removed, changes to the site can diminish the historic integrity. Subdivision of large lots for infill housing development is a process which has taken place in Shoreline for over 75 years. However, this process threatens the integrity of the few historic homes in the city which remain on their original lots (or at least large portions thereof) that still convey the open character of the district in the early 1900s.

6. Recommendations

Future preservation planning in Shoreline work should include:

- use of the inventory to prioritize local landmark designation and National Register listing;
- integration of inventory results with City of Shoreline land use planning activities;
- efforts to identify uses for historic properties, particularly community institutions, which are compatible with their preservation;
- efforts to educate property owners about the historic value and character of their properties; and
- supplementing of the current survey as new information becomes available.

Potential National Register properties identified in the survey process include:

Firlands Sanitorium
Fircrest Naval Hospital Buildings
Lago Vista Community Club

With the incorporation of the City of Shoreline in 1995, a community planning process began to help define and develop a stronger civic identity for the community. A broad understanding of community history among the residents can certainly contribute to this effort. Having entered into an interlocal agreement with King County, the City can now designate and protect local landmarks in collaboration with the King County Historic Preservation Program. The City is also providing support to the Shoreline Historical Museum, which will be able to help distribute survey information and continue to manage and update inventory information.

Research Questions

This survey project generated several areas requiring additional research:

- The earliest known Euro-American settlement in Shoreline took place in Richmond Beach. Native Americans were known to have utilized the area previously. An archaeological sites survey has not been undertaken. Are there any identifiable Native-American sites remaining?
- Many of the early Euro-American residents of Shoreline lived on small tracts of land (c. 5 acres). Tax records and local accounts indicate that small-scale farming of fruit and poultry was widespread. What was the economic base for these small agricultural operations? How were they organized? Did they provide supplemental or regular income?
- The change in scale of post-war subdivisions was remarkable. Prior to the war, developers prepared lots, but did not build homes. Following the war, the scale of home construction changes, with numerous properties being built at one time in one area. What were the economics of these post-war subdivision? How were they marketed and financed? How did materials availability affect building styles?

Community Preservation Concerns

The survey is being used in the city's comprehensive planning process to help define features which influence neighborhood character and historic development patterns, thus strengthening local planning. Survey results are being shared with the local historical museum and with the local branch of the county library system, as well as property owners, thus providing an avenue for wider public education about community history and preservation goals.

The survey has been conducted in partnership with the City of Shoreline and the Shoreline Historical Museum with the intent that the inventory data become part of the Museum's collections, to be shared with the Shoreline community and updated as additional information about sites emerges.